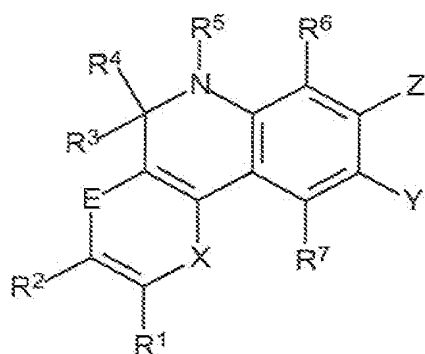


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 10, 11, 13, 15, 20, 21 and 23, and cancel claim 22 as shown in the following Listing of the Claims.

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A compound of the having a formula



wherein

R¹ and R² are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, C₁-C₆ alkyl, C₁-C₆ alkoxy, aryl, heteroaryl, -L-R_x and -L-S_c, wherein said alkyl or alkoxy is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halogen and said aryl or heteroaryl is optionally substituted one or more times by C₁-C₆ alkyl, C₁-C₆ perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, azido, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

or R¹ in combination with R² forms a fused aromatic or heteroaromatic ring that is optionally sulfonated one or more times, or said ring is substituted by -L-R_x or -L-S_c;

or R² in combination with R³ forms a 5- or 6-membered alicyclic ring;

R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C_1 - C_6 alkyl, aromatic or heteroaromatic ring, $-L-R_X$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, hydroxy, or halogen and said aromatic or heteroaromatic ring is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1 - C_6 alkyl, C_1 - C_6 alkoxy, C_1 - C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

or R^3 in combination with R^4 forms a 5- or 6-membered alicyclic ring;

R^5 is independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, carboxymethyl, C_2 - C_6 alkyl, aryl, heteroaryl, $-L-R_X$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, or halogen and said aryl or heteroaryl is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1 - C_6 alkyl, C_1 - C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

R^6 is independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, C_1 - C_6 alkyl, C_1 - C_6 alkoxy, aryl, heteroaryl, $-L-R_X$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl or alkoxy is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halogen and said aryl or heteroaryl is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1 - C_6 alkyl, C_1 - C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, azido, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

or R^4 in combination with R^5 , or R^5 in combination with R^6 , forms a 5- or 6-membered alicyclic ring;

R^7 is independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C_1 - C_6 alkyl, C_1 - C_6 alkoxy, $-L-R_X$ and $-L-S_C$;

one of X and E is O, S, or NR^6 , and the other is absent;

wherein R^8 is independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, carboxymethyl, C_2 - C_6 alkyl, $-L-R_X$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, or halogen; and

R^1 and R^2 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, C_1 - C_6 alkyl, C_1 - C_6 alkoxy, aryl, heteroaryl, $-L-R_X$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl or alkoxy is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halogen and said aryl or heteroaryl is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1 - C_6 alkyl, C_1 - C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, azido, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

Y is independently selected from the group consisting of H, OH, NH_2 , NO, $-(CO)-R^9$, $-(CO)-O-R^{10}$, wherein said R^9 and R^{10} are independently H, C_1 - C_6 alkyl, or a substituted or unsubstituted aryl or heteroaryl ring system having 1-2 rings;

Z is independently selected from the group consisting of H, OH, NHR^{17} , SH, or $C(CR^{11}R^{12})_2OH$; wherein said R^{17} is a C_1 - C_6 alkyl that is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, or halogen and said R^{11} and R^{12} are independently C_1 - C_6 alkyl that are optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halogen, or R^{11} and R^{12} taken in combination form a 5- or 6-membered alicyclic ring;

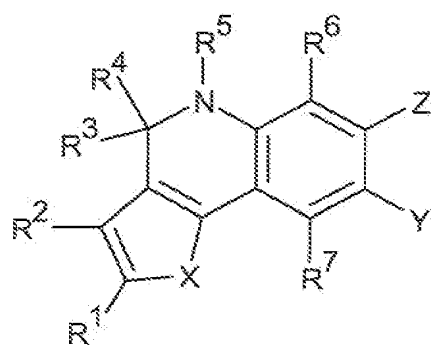
wherein L is a covalent linkage;

R_X is a reactive group; and

S_C is a conjugated substance;

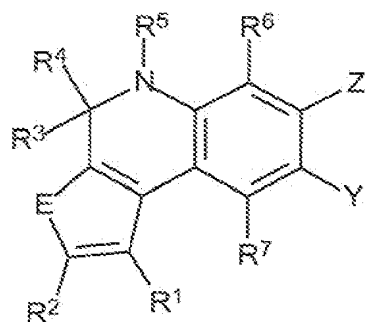
with the proviso that when R^1 and R^2 form a fused aromatic ring, R^6 is not hydrogen or a C_2 alkyl substituted by carboxylic acid.

2. (Previously presented) The compound according to Claim 1, wherein one of X and E is O, or S, and the other is absent.
3. (Original) The compound according to Claim 2, wherein said compound has the formula



wherein X is O or S.

4. (Original) The compound according to Claim 2, wherein said compound has the formula



wherein E is O or S.

5. (Original) The compound according to Claim 3, wherein X is S.

6. (Original) The compound according to Claim 1, wherein

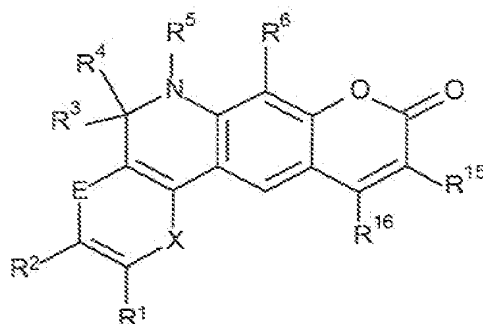
R¹ is hydrogen or sulfonic acid;

R³ and R⁴ are each methyl;

R⁶ and R⁷ are each hydrogen or methyl; and

Z is OH.

7. (Original) The compound according to Claim 1, wherein Y is H or -(CO)-H or NO.
8. (Original) The compound according to Claim 1, wherein said L is independently a single covalent bond or a covalent linkage having 1-20 nonhydrogen atoms selected from the group consisting of C, N, O, P, and S.
9. (Original) The compound according to Claim 1, wherein said R_x is independently selected from the group consisting of an acrylamide, an activated ester of a carboxylic acid, an acyl azide, an acyl nitrile, an aldehyde, an alkyl halide, an amine, an anhydride, an aniline, an aryl halide, an azide, an aziridine, a boronate, a carboxylic acid, a diazoalkane, a haloacetamide, a halotriazine, a hydrazine, an imido ester, an isocyanate, an isothiocyanate, a maleimide, a phosphoramidite, a reactive platinum complex, a sulfonyl halide, and a thiol group.
10. (Currently Amended) The compound according to Claim 1, wherein said S_C is independently selected from the group consisting of an amino acid, a peptide, a protein, a tyramine, a carbohydrate, an metal chelating moiety ~~chelating moiety~~, a nucleoside, a nucleotide, an oligonucleotide, a nucleic acid, a hapten, a psoralen, a drug, a hormone, a lipid, a lipid assembly, a polymer, a polymeric microparticle, a biological cell, and a virus.
11. (Currently amended) A compound of the ~~having a~~ formula



wherein R^1 , R^2 , and R^6 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, C_1 - C_6 alkyl, C_1 - C_6 alkoxy, aryl, heteroaryl, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl or alkoxy is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halogen and said aryl or heteroaryl is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1 - C_6 alkyl, C_1 - C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, azido, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

or R^1 in combination with R^2 forms a fused aromatic or heteroaromatic ring that is optionally sulfonated one or more times, or said ring is substituted by $-L-R_x$ or $-L-S_C$;

R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C_1 - C_6 alkyl, an aromatic or heteroaromatic ring, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, hydroxy, or halogen and said aromatic or heteroaromatic ring is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1 - C_6 alkyl, C_1 - C_6 alkoxy, C_1 - C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

or R^2 in combination with R^3 , or R^3 in combination with R^4 , forms a 5- or 6-membered alicyclic ring;

R^5 is independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, carboxymethyl, C_2 - C_6 alkyl, aryl, heteroaryl, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, or halogen and said aryl or heteroaryl is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1 - C_6 alkyl, C_1 - C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

or R^4 in combination with R^5 , or R^5 in combination with R^6 , forms a 5- or 6-membered alicyclic ring;

one of X and E is O, S, NR^8 , or $CR^1=CR^2$ and the other is absent;

wherein R^6 is independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, carboxymethyl, C_2-C_6 alkyl, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, or halogen; and

R^{11} and R^{12} are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkoxy, aryl, heteroaryl, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl or alkoxy is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halogen and said aryl or heteroaryl is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, azido, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

R^{15} and R^{16} are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, cyano, nitro, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, C_1-C_6 alkyl, an aromatic or heteroaromatic ring system having 1-2 fused rings, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halogen and said aromatic or heteroaromatic ring system is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

wherein L is a covalent linkage;

R_x is a reactive group; and

S_C is a conjugated substance.

12. (Original) The compound according to Claim 11, wherein said one of X and E is O or S.

13. (Currently amended) The compound according to Claim 12, wherein

R^6 and R^7 are hydrogen;

R^3 and R^4 are each methyl;

R^1 is hydrogen or sulfonic acid;

one of R^{15} and R^{16} is $-L-R_x$ or $-L-S_C$, and the other is hydrogen, C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 perfluoroalkyl, or cyano;

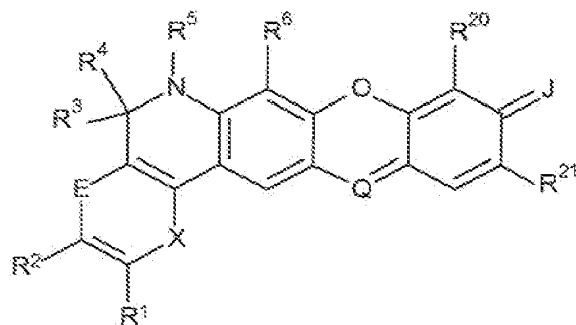
wherein L is a single covalent bond, or L is a covalent linkage having 1-20 nonhydrogen atoms selected from the group consisting of C, N, O, P, and S, and

wherein R_x is independently selected from the group consisting of an acrylamide, an activated ester of a carboxylic acid, an acyl azide, an acyl nitrile, an aldehyde, an alkyl halide, an amine, an anhydride, an aniline, an aryl halide, an azide, an aziridine, a boronate, a carboxylic acid, a diazoalkane, a haloacetamide, a halotriazine, a hydrazine, an imido ester, an isocyanate, an isothiocyanate, a maleimide, a phosphoramidite, a reactive platinum complex, a sulfonyl halide, and a thiol group; and

wherein S_C is independently selected from the group consisting of an amino acid, a peptide, a protein, a tyramine, a carbohydrate, an metal chelating moiety ~~chelating moiety~~, a nucleoside, a nucleotide, an oligonucleotide, a nucleic acid, a hapten, a psoralen, a drug, a hormone, a lipid, a lipid assembly, a polymer, a polymeric microparticle, a biological cell, and a virus.

14. (Original) The compound according to Claim 11, wherein one of said R^{15} or R^{16} is an aromatic or heteroaromatic ring system having 1-2 fused rings that is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl.

15. (Currently amended) A compound of the ~~having a~~ formula:



wherein R^1 , R^2 , and R^6 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, C_1 - C_6 alkyl, C_1 - C_6 alkoxy, aryl, heteroaryl, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl or alkoxy is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halogen and said aryl or heteroaryl is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1 - C_6 alkyl, C_1 - C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, azido, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

or R^1 in combination with R^2 forms a fused aromatic or heteroaromatic ring that is optionally sulfonated one or more times, or said ring is substituted by $-L-R_x$ or $-L-S_C$;

R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C_1 - C_6 alkyl, an aromatic or heteroaromatic ring, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, hydroxy, or halogen and said aromatic or heteroaromatic ring is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1 - C_6 alkyl, C_1 - C_6 alkoxy, C_1 - C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

or R^2 in combination with R^3 , or R^3 in combination with R^4 , forms a 5- or 6-membered alicyclic ring;

R^5 is independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, carboxymethyl, C_2 - C_6 alkyl, aryl, heteroaryl, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, or halogen and said aryl or heteroaryl is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1 - C_6 alkyl, C_1 - C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

or R^4 in combination with R^5 , or R^5 in combination with R^6 , forms a 5- or 6-membered alicyclic ring;

one of X and E is O, S, NR^8 , or $CR^1=CR^2$, and the other is absent;

wherein R^8 is independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, carboxymethyl, C_2-C_6 alkyl, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_c$, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, or halogen; and

R^{17} and R^{27} are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkoxy, aryl, heteroaryl, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_c$, wherein said alkyl or alkoxy is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halogen and said aryl or heteroaryl is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, azido, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

R^{20} and R^{21} are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkoxy, aromatic or heteroaromatic ring, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_c$, wherein said alkyl or alkoxy is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halogen said aromatic or heteroaromatic ring is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

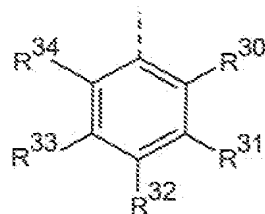
J is O or $NR^{37}R^{38}$,

wherein R^{37} and R^{38} are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C_1-C_6 alkyl, aryl, heteroaryl, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_c$, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, or halogen; or R^{37} in combination with R^{38} forms a saturated 5- or 6-membered heterocycle that is a piperidine, a morpholine, a pyrrolidine or a piperazine, wherein said heterocycle is optionally substituted by methyl, carboxylic acid, or a carboxylic acid ester of a C_1-C_6 alkyl;

or R^{37} in combination with R^{20} , or R^{38} in combination with R^{21} , or both, form a 5- or 6-membered ring that is saturated or unsaturated, and is optionally substituted by one or more sulfonic acids, or C_1-C_6 alkyl that is optionally substituted by sulfonic acid;

Q is N or CR^{28} , wherein R^{28} is independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, F, CN, carboxylic acid, a carboxylic acid ester of a C_1-C_6 alcohol, a C_1-C_6

alkyl, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, or halogen; or R^{28} comprises a formula



wherein R^{30} , R^{31} , R^{32} , R^{33} and R^{34} are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, F, Cl, Br, I, sulfonic acid, carboxylic acid, CN, nitro, hydroxy, azido, amino, hydrazino, C_1 - C_{18} alkyl, C_1 - C_{18} alkoxy, C_1 - C_{18} alkylthio, C_1 - C_{18} alkanoylamino, C_1 - C_{18} alkylaminocarbonyl, C_2 - C_{36} dialkylaminocarbonyl, C_1 - C_{18} alkyloxycarbonyl, C_7 - C_{18} arylcarboxamido, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl or aryl portions of said R^{30} , R^{31} , R^{32} , R^{33} and R^{34} are optionally substituted one or more times by substituents selected from the group consisting of F, Cl, Br, I, hydroxy, carboxylic acid, a carboxylic acid ester of a C_1 - C_6 alcohol, sulfonic acid, amino, C_1 - C_6 alkylamino, C_2 - C_6 dialkylamino and C_1 - C_6 alkoxy; or a pair of adjacent R^{30} , R^{31} , R^{32} , R^{33} and R^{34} substituents when taken in combination, form a fused 6-membered aromatic ring that is optionally further substituted by carboxylic acid; and

wherein L is a covalent linkage;

R_x is a reactive group; and

S_C is a conjugated substance.

16. (Original) The compound according to Claim 15, wherein said Q is N.
17. (Original) The compound according to Claim 15, wherein said J is O and said Q is CR^{26} .
18. (Original) The compound according to Claim 17, wherein one of said R^5 , R^{21} , R^{30} , R^{31} , R^{32} , R^{33} , and R^{34} is $-L-R_x$ or $-L-S_C$.

19. (Original) The compound according to Claim 15, wherein

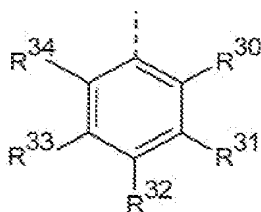
said R^3 and R^4 are each methyl;

R^1 is H or a sulfonic acid;

R^6 is H; and

J is $NR^{37}R^{38}$.

20. (Currently amended) The compound according to Claim 19, wherein Q is CR^{28} and R^{28} has the formula



wherein one of R^{30} , R^{31} , R^{32} , R^{33} , and R^{34} is $-L-R_x$ or $-L-S_c$; and

wherein L is a single covalent bond, or L is a covalent linkage having 1-20 nonhydrogen atoms selected from the group consisting of C, N, O, P, and S, and

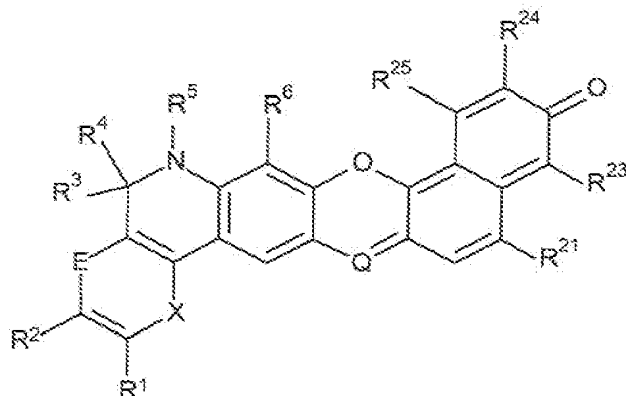
wherein R_x is independently selected from the group consisting of an acrylamide, an activated ester of a carboxylic acid, an acyl azide, an acyl nitrile, an aldehyde, an alkyl halide, an amine, an anhydride, an aniline, an aryl halide, an azide, an aziridine, a boronate, a carboxylic acid, a diazoalkane, a haloacetamide, a halotriazine, a hydrazine, an imido ester, an isocyanate, an isothiocyanate, a maleimide, a phosphoramidite, a reactive platinum complex, a sulfonyl halide, and a thiol group; and

wherein S_c is independently selected from the group consisting of an amino acid, a peptide, a protein, a tyramine, a carbohydrate, an metal chelating moiety

~~chelating moiety~~, a nucleoside, a nucleotide, an oligonucleotide, a nucleic acid, a haptan,

a psoralen, a drug, a hormone, a lipid, a lipid assembly, a polymer, a polymeric microparticle, a biological cell, and a virus.

21. (Currently amended) A compound of the ~~comprising~~ a formula



wherein R^1 , R^2 , and R^6 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid C_1 - C_6 alkyl, C_1 - C_6 alkoxy, aryl, heteroaryl, $-L-R_x$, and $-L-S_c$, wherein said alkyl or alkoxy is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halogen and said aryl or heteroaryl is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1 - C_6 alkyl, C_1 - C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, azido, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

or R^1 in combination with R^2 forms a fused aromatic or heteroaromatic ring that is optionally sulfonated one or more times, or said ring is substituted by $-L-R_x$ or $-L-S_c$;

R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C_1 - C_6 alkyl, an aromatic or heteroaromatic ring, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_c$, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, hydroxy, or halogen and said aromatic or heteroaromatic ring is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1 - C_6 alkyl, C_1 - C_6 alkoxy, C_1 - C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

or R^2 in combination with R^3 , or R^3 in combination with R^4 , forms a 5- or 6-membered alicyclic ring;

R^5 is independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, carboxymethyl, C_2-C_6 alkyl, aryl, heteroaryl, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_c$, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, or halogen and said aryl or heteroaryl is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

or R^4 in combination with R^5 , or R^5 in combination with R^6 , forms a 5- or 6-membered alicyclic ring;

one of E and X is O, S, NR^8 , or $CR^1=CR^2$, and the other is absent;

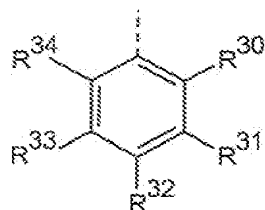
wherein R^8 is independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, carboxymethyl, C_2-C_6 alkyl, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_c$, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, or halogen; and

R^1 and R^2 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 alkoxy, aryl, heteroaryl, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_c$, wherein said alkyl or alkoxy is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halogen and said aryl or heteroaryl is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, azido, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

R^{21} , R^{23} , R^{24} , and R^{25} are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, cyano, nitro, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, C_1-C_6 alkyl, aromatic or heteroaromatic ring, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_c$, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halogen said aromatic or heteroaromatic ring is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

Q is N or CR^{28} , wherein R^{28} is independently selected from the group consisting of

hydrogen, F, CN, carboxylic acid, a carboxylic acid ester of a C₁-C₆ alcohol, a C₁-C₆ alkyl, -L-R_x and -L-S_C, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, or halogen; or R²⁸ comprises a formula



wherein R³⁰, R³¹, R³², R³³ and R³⁴ are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, F, Cl, Br, I, sulfonic acid, carboxylic acid, CN, nitro, hydroxy, azido, amino, hydrazino, C₁-C₁₈ alkyl, C₁-C₁₈ alkoxy, C₁-C₁₈ alkylthio, C₁-C₁₈ alkanoylamino, C₁-C₁₈ alkylaminocarbonyl, C₂-C₃₆ dialkylaminocarbonyl, C₁-C₁₈ alkylloxycarbonyl, C₇-C₁₈ arylcarboxamido, -L-R_x and -L-S_C, wherein said alkyl or aryl portions of said R³⁰, R³¹, R³², R³³ and R³⁴ are optionally substituted one or more times by substituents selected from the group consisting of F, Cl, Br, I, hydroxy, carboxylic acid, a carboxylic acid ester of a C₁-C₆ alcohol, sulfonic acid, amino, C₁-C₆ alkylamino, C₂-C₆ dialkylamino and C₁-C₆ alkoxy; or a pair of adjacent R³⁰, R³¹, R³², R³³ and R³⁴ substituents when taken in combination, form a fused 6-membered aromatic ring that is optionally further substituted by carboxylic acid; and

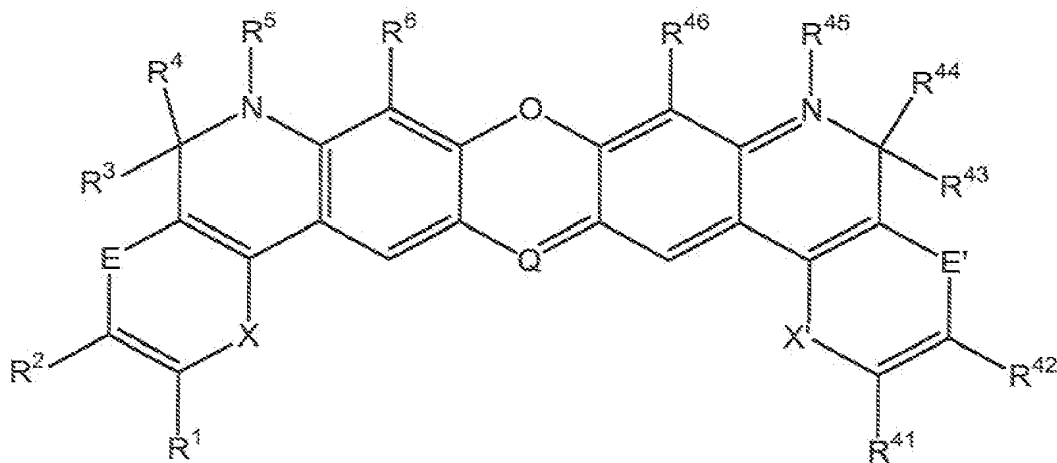
wherein L is a covalent linkage;

R_x is a reactive group; and

S_C is a conjugated substance.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Currently amended) ~~The compound according to Claim 22,~~ A compound of the formula:



wherein E and E' are each S; X is absent; R¹ in combination with R² forms an aromatic ring that is optionally sulfonated one or more times, or said ring is substituted by -L-R_X or -L-S_C; and R⁴¹ in combination with R⁴² forms an aromatic aromatic ring that is optionally sulfonated one or more times, or said ring is substituted by -L-R_X or -L-S_C;

R⁶ and R⁴⁶ are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, C₁-C₆ alkyl, C₁-C₆ alkoxy, aryl, heteroaryl, -L-R_X and -L-S_C, wherein said alkyl or alkoxy is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halogen and said aryl or heteroaryl is optionally substituted one or more times by C₁-C₆ alkyl, C₁-C₆ perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, azido, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

R³, R⁴, R⁴³, and R⁴⁴ are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C₁-C₆ alkyl, an aromatic or heteroaromatic ring, -L-R_X and -L-S_C, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, hydroxy, or halogen and said aromatic or heteroaromatic ring is optionally substituted one or more times by C₁-C₆ alkyl, C₁-C₆ alkoxy, C₁-C₆ perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

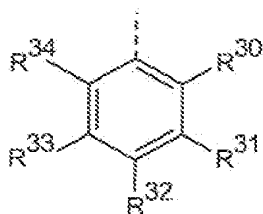
or R³ in combination with R⁴, or R⁴³ in combination with R⁴⁴, or any combination thereof, forms a 5- or 6-membered alicyclic ring;

R^5 and R^{45} are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, carboxymethyl, C_2-C_6 alkyl, aryl, heteroaryl, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, or halogen and said aryl or heteroaryl is optionally substituted one or more times by C_1-C_6 alkyl, C_1-C_6 perfluoroalkyl, cyano, halogen, carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, or halomethyl;

or R^4 in combination with R^5 , or R^5 in combination with R^6 , or R^{44} in combination with R^{45} , or R^{45} in combination with R^{46} , or any combination thereof, forms a 5- or 6-membered alicyclic ring;

wherein R^8 is independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, carboxymethyl, C_2-C_6 alkyl, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, or halogen; and

Q is N or CR^{28} , wherein R^{28} is independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, F, CN, carboxylic acid, a carboxylic acid ester of a C_1-C_6 alcohol, a C_1-C_6 alkyl, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl is optionally substituted by carboxylic acid, sulfonic acid, amino, or halogen; or R^{28} comprises a formula



wherein R^{30} , R^{31} , R^{32} , R^{33} and R^{34} are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, F, Cl, Br, I, sulfonic acid, carboxylic acid, CN, nitro, hydroxy, azido, amino, hydrazino, C_1-C_{18} alkyl, C_1-C_{18} alkoxy, C_1-C_{18} alkylthio, C_1-C_{18} alkanoylamino, C_1-C_{18} alkylaminocarbonyl, C_2-C_{38} dialkylaminocarbonyl, C_1-C_{18} alkyloxycarbonyl, C_7-C_{18} arylcarboxamido, $-L-R_x$ and $-L-S_C$, wherein said alkyl or aryl portions of said R^{30} , R^{31} , R^{32} , R^{33} and R^{34} are optionally substituted one or more times by substituents selected from the group consisting of F, Cl, Br, I, hydroxy, carboxylic acid, a carboxylic acid ester of a C_1-C_6 alcohol, sulfonic acid, amino, C_1-C_6 alkylamino, C_2-C_6 dialkylamino and C_1-C_6

alkoxy; or a pair of adjacent R^{30} , R^{31} , R^{32} , R^{33} and R^{34} substituents when taken in combination, form a fused 6-membered aromatic ring that is optionally further substituted by carboxylic acid; and

wherein L is a covalent linkage;

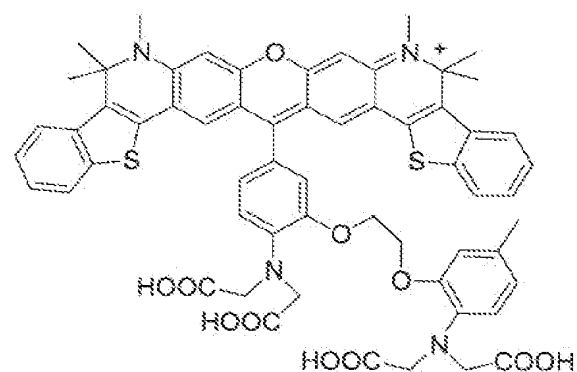
R_x is a reactive group; and

S_G is a conjugated substance;

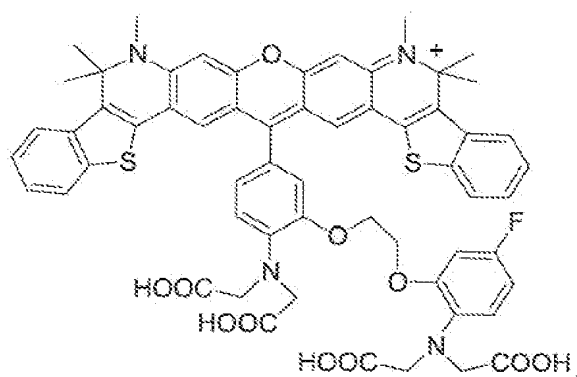
with the proviso that at least one of R^1 , R^2 , R^3 , R^4 , R^5 , R^6 , R^8 , R^{26} , R^{30} , R^{31} , R^{32} , R^{33} , R^{34} , R^{41} , R^{42} , R^{43} , R^{44} , R^{45} and R^{46} is a conjugated substance.

24. (Original) The compound according to Claim 23, wherein said conjugated substance is independently selected from the group consisting of an amino acid, a peptide, a protein, a tyramine, a carbohydrate, a metal chelating moiety, a nucleoside, a nucleotide, an oligonucleotide, a nucleic acid, a hapten, a psoralen, a drug, a hormone, a lipid, a lipid assembly, a polymer, a polymeric microparticle, a biological cell, and a virus.
25. (Original) The compound according to Claim 24, wherein said conjugated substance is a metal chelating moiety wherein said metal chelating moiety is optionally substituted by a reactive group.
26. (Original) The compound according to Claim 25, wherein said metal chelating moiety is BAPTA.
27. (Original) The compound according to Claim 26, wherein said R^{26} is said BAPTA.
28. (Original) The compound according to Claim 27, wherein said reactive group is selected from the group consisting of a carboxylic acid, a succinimidyl ester of a carboxylic acid, a maleimide, a cadaverine, a benzophenone, an aryl azide and a diazirine.

29. (Original) The compound according to Claim 27, wherein said compound is according to formula



or



30. (Original) The compound according to Claim 28, wherein said compound is according to formula

